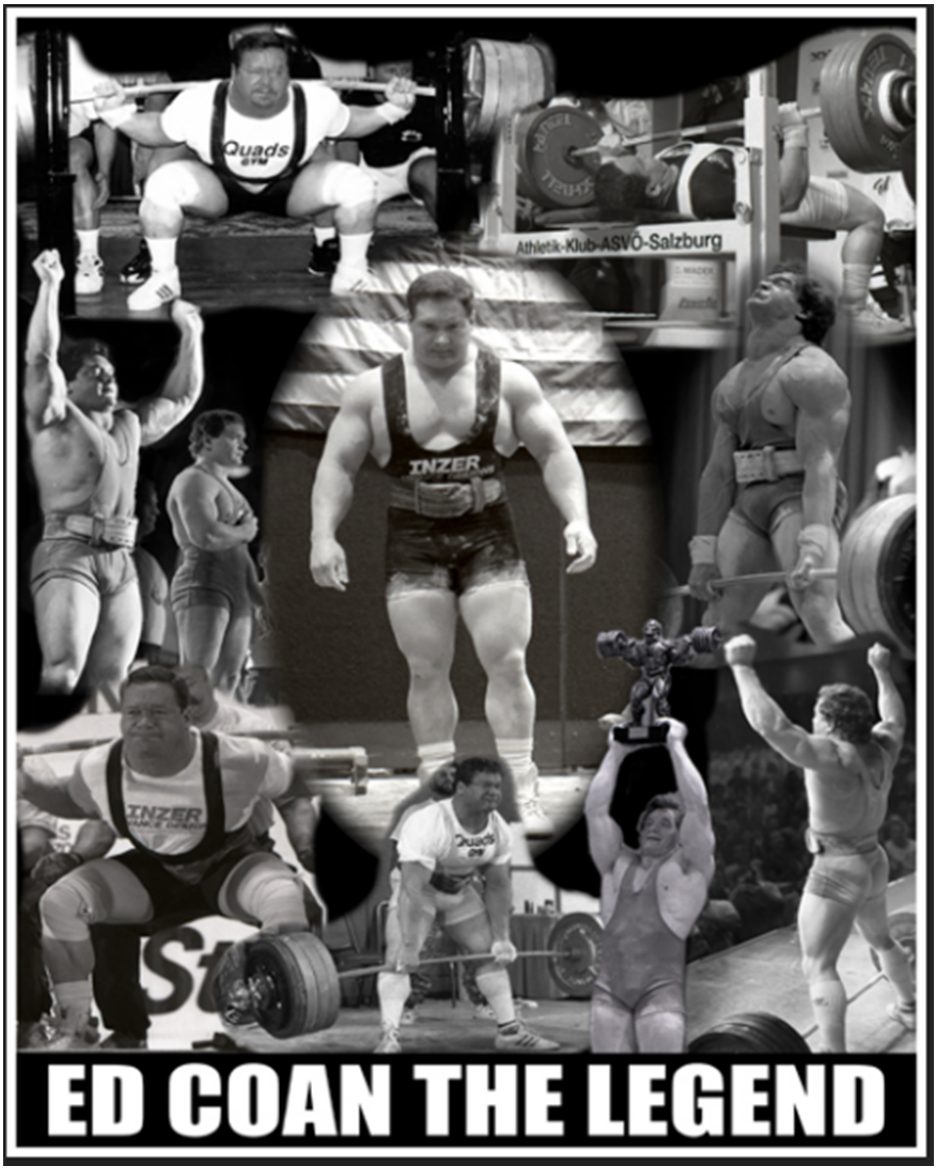

Presents…

The Strength Inc Core Manual for Strength Training

Version 2.0 Updated November 2013

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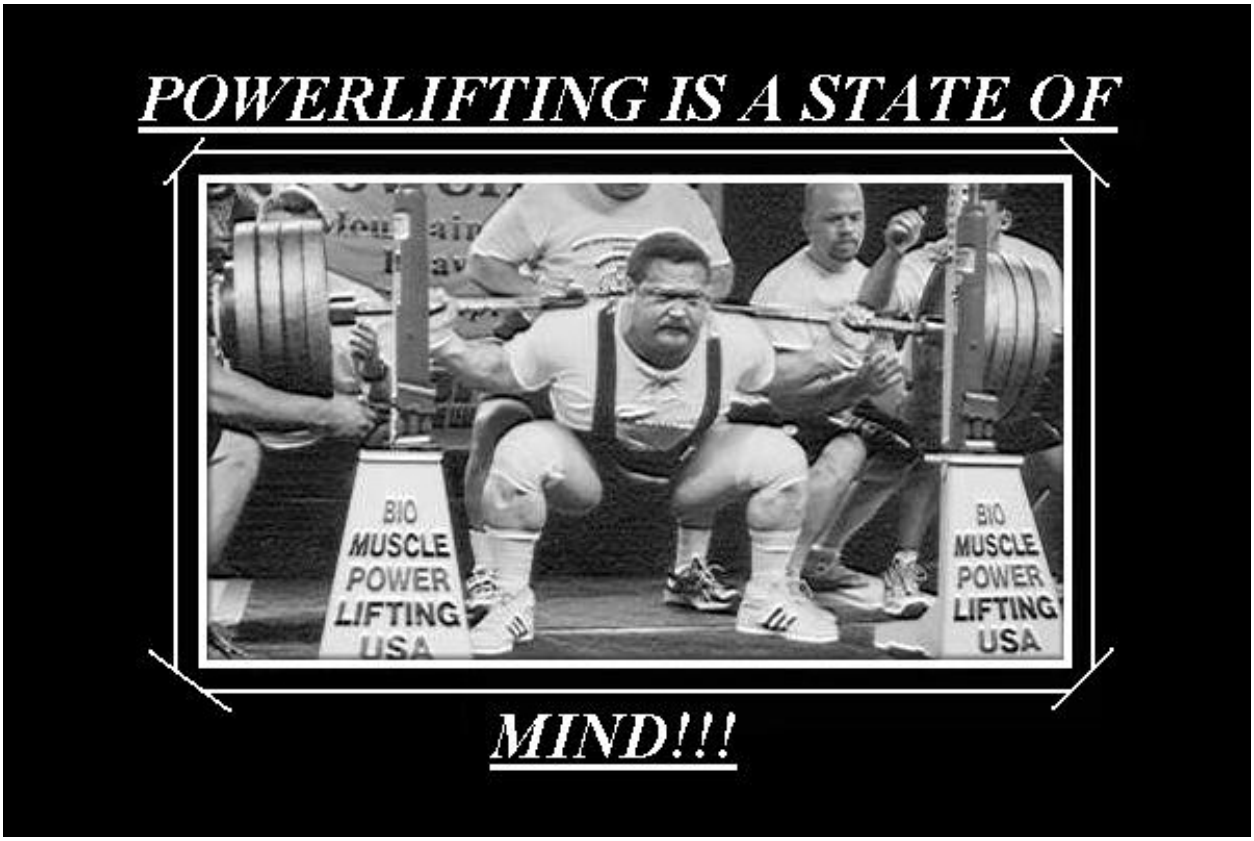
Introduction

The beginner recommended exercises in the following outline is to help those who are either just getting started, just getting back into strength training, or if you have been doing it for a long time and are hitting a plateau. It's an easy introduction before we get into the bigger goal setting and routines to get your body where you want it. The key is building a solid foundation.



Why Periodization?

It appears to me that there will be a constant argument about theories, and approach as to how one should structure their workout regime or routine if you will. A periodization program is the best when it comes to optimizing the strength gains and over training that many other workouts tend to have. There also is the fact that you have total control over how you implement your workout in terms of the weight you use and how it applies to your overall strength goals. Periodization itself is the gradual cycling of a specific and intense volume of training to achieve peak levels of strength. Hence why yes this is a "powerlifting" workout but the overall idea of the program and Strength Inc is to build just that… Strength! The typical powerlifting cycle will shift gradually from high volume and low intensity to low volume and high intensity over several weeks. The length of the cycle revolves around dates of competition or your own personal goals. The example laid out in this specific program is for an 8 week period of time. The typical powerlifting cycle will consist of three phases:

Hypertrophy: In this first phase, you will notice that it normally consists of 8-10 reps per set. This phase may last from one to six weeks with intensities from 5% to 79% of your ORM (one rep max). When it comes to strength training I feel the hypertrophy phase is responsible for developing a good muscular and metabolic base for the future. All rest between sets in this phase should be kept between 45 seconds and 1.5 minutes. Shorter rests in this phase will maximize the natural primary anabolic hormones involved in muscle tissue growth such as testosterone, growth hormone and insulin like growth factors, while minimizing cortisol production!

Strength: Here you will notice in the strength phase that it will normally consist of five to eight repetitions per set. This phase may last from two to eight weeks. In the strength phase the weight intensity is gradually increased to loads of 80% to 90% of 1 RM. obviously this is the phase where the athlete increases muscular strength. The rest between stets in the strength phase should be increased to about five minutes. This length of time will assure that the muscles have completely recovered from the higher intensity workout.

Power: This phase will consist of sets with repetitions of one to four and intensity levels gradually increasing from 90% to 107% of 1 RM. The power phase is where the athlete peaks the strength levels for competition. Rest between sets in the power phase should be increased to about five to ten minutes. These maximal to near maximal repetitions require much more time for the muscle to recover 100% and be ready for the next set.

The importance of finding your One Rep Max:

If you are going into this work out and have not set your goal as to where you want to be at the end of these 8 week odyssey then you need to learn how to estimate what your ORM is now in order to try to exceed it in the next weeks. So if you do not know already what your ORM is then you can use this simple formula to see what it could be based on some of your reps within your lifts. Use what you know you can life in terms of your best in the following of a set of five, four, three, two, repetition is. Of course the most accurate is the single or 1 RM, but we can get a pretty accurate 1 RM by using your best two, three, four, or five RM. Here is the formula:

Take your best and multiply it by the numbers given.

2 reps - ? x 1.06 (Examples 255lbs would be 270 lbs 1 rep max)
3 reps - ? x 1.12
4 reps - ? x 1.15
5 reps - ? x 1.18

This will give an estimate of your best 1 RM without actually having to do it. Now we have a number to work with. After completing the 8 Weeks you now have a 1 RM that can be used for the next cycle! You can add 7% to 11% every 8-12 weeks. With consistency, this amount of weight will add up to really big weight, in time. So be patient and consistent. DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ADD MORE WEIGHT TO THESE PERCENTAGES IF NEEDED. I can give you a plan to get strong, but you are the one who has to load up the bar. Don't cheat yourself.

Ed Coan's Strength Inc 8 Week Cycle Example

Percentage	Sets	Reps
Percentage of 1RM		
70%	3	10
76%	3	8
82%	3	5
88%	3	4
91%	3	3
97%	2	2
100%	2	2
104%	1	1
New 1RM	**1**	**1**

Note: Percentages are to be approximate not exact play with them!

Mind Set:

Begin each workout with the mind set of getting stronger (I know sounds obvious) but the reality is it all begins in the mind. We must strengthen our minds as well as our muscles. I often visualize myself performing the lift with perfect form. See it in your mind first then go and make it a reality. You have to develop a level of confidence with your mind as well as your body especially to lift heavy weights. This will take time to master, but once achieved it will have a tremendous impact not only in the gym but also in your personal life.

Warm-up:

One thing you have to remember when approaching any kind of strength training is to warm up properly. Before starting any physical activity we need to properly warm the body up, get the blood flowing so to speak. Doing some form of cardio is highly recommended to help achieve this. Do what type of cardio will suit you best whether it be brisk walking, light jogging, or using some cardio equipment

(like a treadmill as an example). The key is to perform this activity for about 5-10 minutes at a moderate pace. Again the goal is to get a sweat started. After completing cardio you should stretch out the upper and lower body, holding each stretch for 10-20 seconds performing each stretch twice. Stretching is a key component in reducing injury as well as promoting muscle growth. Through stretching our muscles, tendons, and ligaments become more elastic/flexible which will again cut down on injury. In order to get an effective stretch we must warm up the muscles through some form of cardio (as mentioned). The total warm up time may take about 10-20 minutes to complete. This will make your body feel better. The better we feel the more effective and productive our workouts will be!

Ed Coan's 8 Week Training Program – Laying the Foundation:

Note: Everything depends on your starting lifting weight

Start light and slowly as this is going to be the key to developing proper form. If you cannot perform a movement with the proper form the exercise will not do what it is designed to do.

"Powerlifting technique is loaded with subtlety and it takes years, maybe decades, to perfect. The process is fluid, never static. My own technique is far from perfect. I continually refine redefine and renovate both my technique and approach to powerlifting"—Ed Coan

THE SQUAT: Preparation and Incite

Let me say that the squats when done with good form WILL NOT DAMAGE THE KNEE. It will only strengthen the knee. Not only is the squat prescribed every day to rehabilitate knee injuries but also to prevent knee injury when training for sports.

Bar Placement

You can do either low bar or high bar squats, it seems that with some people more weight can be handled and better controlled and can be maintained with the low bar placement. Low bar lifters will have more gluteal and erector development and high bar lifters will have more quadriceps development. It just depends on what feels best for you.

Bar Placement On The Rack

This a personal choice, but remember, the more work you have to do getting the bar in and out of the rack, the less you will be able to do when you squat the weight. Use as little movement as necessary getting out of the rack with the weight. Every time you have to take a step backward you are using up valuable energy. Not to mention having to return the weight once you are done. The squat rack always looks like it is further away once you have finished a heavy set.

Hand Placement

Hand placement can affect one's performance. With a narrower grip, more upper body synergy is brought into play. This includes the traps, rhomboids, supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor and major, and the lats. Wider hand placements are usually used by those with less flexibility or gripping problems. Bar control is lessened as the hands are placed wider apart.

Head Position

The head position is the one point most experts agree on! When looking down, one tends to lean forward. It works best to find an imaginary spot about eye level when standing erect and keep the eyes fixed on this spot during descent and ascent.

Stance and Foot Placement

The stance is an area no one agrees on. There are good squatters with a narrow stance as well as good squatters with a wide stance. The best suggestion is to start about shoulder's width and find a comfortable stance where you can

perform a squat with good form using no weight. Experiment! Toes however should be pointed outward at about a 45 degree angle. This helps to distribute the weight a little more evenly and also gives you a better base. The weight when squatting should be about 75 % on the heel of the foot.

Foot Apparel

Jogging and running shoes are not the best for weight lifter's. Squatting in jogging or running shoes will allow lateral shifting of the weight and possible injury to the ankle.

Squatting Speed

Speed of descent and ascent is usually a by-product of the lifter's body build and athletic skills. Always make sure the weight is controlled on descent as well as ascent.

Depth

It is would suggested that you go no further than just below parallel. That means where the top of the thigh (where it joins the hip) goes below the top of the knee. It is suspected that going beyond this point places unnecessary stress on the patellar ligament and the cartilage of the knee. If you do train lower than parallel (which is not suggested), use extreme control, DO NOT bounce off the bottom.

The Belt

The belt is utilized to maintain lumbar integrity throughout descent and ascent. Get a belt that is as wide in the front as in the back. Refrain from wearing a belt during lighter sets. Try to only wear a belt for maximal and near-maximal sets or the heavy work sets. The beltless sets allow the deep abdominal muscles to receive a training stimulus without placing excessive compressive forces on the spine disks. The lifting belt should be worn as low on the hips as possible. It is not necessary to have it super tight, but just snug. This will enable the abdominal muscles to maintain adequate pressure to keep the spine in proper position.

Knee Wraps

Knee wraps are not only a necessity for safety they are an aid in squatting with heavier weights. Knee wraps accomplish this by adding a tremendous amount of support and spring to the bottom of the squat enabling you to train with heavier weights. Knee wraps actually help you get out of the hole. Training with heavier weights stimulates more muscle growth, which will eventually lead to new personal bests. There are many different brands of knee wraps from which to choose, so experiment with different brands until you find the one that best suits your needs.

How To Properly Use Knee Wraps: To get optimal results from your knee wraps, they must be put on correctly. Start wrapping just below the knee and spiral upward about two wrap widths above the knee. If you wrap with a bent knee you will not have the necessary tightness, so make sure you are getting the wraps on tightly. (Also see the knee wrap video we have in the members section)

When To Use Knee Wraps: You should avoid using the knee wraps until you are doing heavy sets of five repetitions. Start out with an old pair and gradually add newer knee wraps as the weight goes up and the repetitions decrease. Obviously, you would wrap tighter for a heavy single than you would for a set of five reps. It is advisable to buy a couple of new pair of knee wraps each year.

Lifting Suits

Lifting suits are another necessity for big squats. They are not only a safety aid but they actually enable training with heavier weights by adding extra support to the glutes and hips. There are many different brands of lifting suits on the market. Try several different brands until you have found a suit that you like. I personally have found that the brands with the locking legs work best. This feature will prevent the bottom of the suit from sliding up on the leg when you squatting, thus losing some support.

When To Use A Lifting Suit: I believe you should use a lifting suit in about the same manner as you would the knee wraps. Just like the knee wraps, the squat suit should get tighter as the weights go up and the repetitions go down. The heavier the weight the more support that will be needed.

Warning: Always check you squat suit for tears or runners. This could possibly cause you to completely lose control of the bar and even fall with the weight.

Chalk

Many lifters use a magnesium carbonate chalk when attempting heavy squats. It is recommended that the shoulders and hands be lightly chalked to prevent any slipping of the bar.

I use five exercises, and their respective variations, to train my legs: squats, leg extensions, single leg presses, leg curls, and calf raises. Of course the main leg exercise is the squat, which is the greatest single weight training exercise. Done correctly, squats develop the quads, hips, and lower back, even the traps, hamstrings and shoulders are stimulated to a degree. The other leg exercises I use will attack the individual muscles of the leg from a variety of angles. The squat is always performed first and the other exercises are done for a few sets each following the squat. I will allows as much time as I need to recover between my heavy sets and less recovery time on the lighter warm-up sets. Once my breathing has returned to normal , I will hit the next set. Practice good technique at all times. Want to discover technical flaws in your lifting? Have a friend record you and send it in to me and I will break you down! It is with this type of visual aid that I can best assist you and your training goals as well as you yourself being able to evaluate you own technique and potential draw backs in form etc. With the visual aide showing the depth of the squat it is really an invaluable resource. You squat, view it send it in and together we can see how we can improve you technique in all of your lifts.

The full squat is the greatest single progressive resistance exercise. Physiologically, the full squat stimulates more muscle than any other exercise. Being called somewhat of a squat master it has been said “High squats are

worthless squats, you need a full complete range of motion." My biggest squat tip for you is pause squats. I love them! One thing I did in my off season training was utilize the pause squat. In my opinion if you are "serious" about squatting whether you are a powerlifter or not I highly suggest you incorporate them into your workout plan. Here is a tip if you are planning on incorporating them. Squat down into the very deepest pocket of the hole, sit tense and bolt upright for a full second or two. Explode the weight upward out of the hole until lockout. I cannot stress enough about how I feel that pause squats have been vital in my developing of a solid posture when in the hole and really it teaches compensatory acceleration.

If you are a beginner or actually if you are really just not killing it when you are hitting your squats let this sink in. You absolutely must get your squats legal, they must be below parallel. Unlock those hips and get down in there. FORGET ABOUT POUNDAGE! You can build that up over time. DEPTH is the all important element when it comes to squatting whether big weight, small weight, it all hinges on your depth. Experiment with different foot stances. Test getting down below parallel using different width stances, as most powerlifters use a hip lock and find that specific foot width that allows them to achieve legal depth but no more. My advice is experiment with stance, width, and hip-lock.

One thing I would like to point out here is that an all-out squat routine can have a devastating after-effect on the human body. Squats build incredible amount of strength (read that again and let it sink in), power and muscle. Did you catch all that squats can do for you? Strength, power, build muscle that is what squats are all about! The downside to all this of course is going to be the aftershock. I have to rest my body after a heavy squat session. I need to take in food right after the workout and like to lie down for 30-60 minutes after training and eating. This might not be ideal for you but it's what worked for me. The body shock caused by performing squats, leg presses, leg extensions, leg curls and finally calf raises, requires a full seven days if you are really training hard. To lift on unrecovered, still healing muscles is counterproductive in the extreme!

Breaking down an Ed Coan Squat:

I take a shoulder width stance in the squat. I position the bar on my back so that it rests below the lower ridge of the trapezius, resting on the deltoids. This is known as low-bar position; high-bar is when the bar rests on top of the traps. When I press up out of the racks at the start of the squat, my feet are about eight inches apart.

I wiggle under the bar until I am satisfied that I have the right positioning. Stay centered; accidentally positioning the weight two inches to the right or left will ruin a square set. Once positioned, I push with the legs, stand up with the weight, take a breath and then step back out of the racks. Left foot back, right foot back, left adjustment step, right adjustment step, set. As soon as I settle my feet, I tense and flex every muscle on my body. I stand bolt upright and chug three breaths, hard and deep. I spread and lift my shoulders as I suck in oxygen.

I suck n my third breath, unlock my knees and thrust my butt back. As I begin to lower myself, I keep my head up. Lock your eyes on a point at the eye level and keep a visual lock on this spot through the lift. This is a learned skill. I lower until my thighs are below parallel. Depth again is everything. Don't squat shallow. This is the first commandment of squatting if you will. Stay tight and do not allow any muscle to relax. Many lifters inadvertently relax as they transition from sinking to rising. This is called loose in the hole and when the waist and lower back muscles lose their muscle tension the athlete bends, forward. Depth is determined by foot width and hip flexibility.

At the point where I transition from sinking to raising, I mentally tell myself to explode! I time this internal verbal command for the exact instant when I switch from lowering to rising. Use a tight, controlled lowering and then an explosive assent, I keep my head erect and keep my chest up. My eyes are focused on the visual sight spot. I consciously command my legs to push. Many lifters get so distracted with the peripheral items that they forget to push with their legs at this critical point. I try to keep back on my heels as I push upward. This is particularly important for me as I tend to use a lot of back and I can get rolled forward by a weight if not careful.

I increase the velocity of my pushing. The tendency is to let off the accelerator after the hard part (exploding out of the hole) is over. Push as fast as you can throughout the lift. Force several deep breaths before beginning the next rep. keep your eyes glued on the exact visual focus spot. Wandering eyes break concentration. Look at the pictures in this manual in the leg section or go and look at the video breakdown of my past dvd release in the Ed Coan Library or me coaching Reggie in the gym. Either way you will be able to see exactly what I am talking about.

Note: my typical squat warm up looked like this: 135x10, 255x8, 455x5, 550x3, 655x3, 745x1, 805x1 then I would go into my work sets(top set) maybe 850x5. This warm up strategy ensures muscles are warmed thoroughly, technique is mechanically grooved-in and nerve synapses are firing correctly. All warm-ups should be done with an eye towards technical perfection. The light sets that precede your top set are where technique is improved. Techniques need refinement on assistance work. Every exercise, every set, every rep should be performed with concentration, intensity and perfect technical execution. Crisp technique will radically reduce your chance of injury. Most weight training injuries occur when the lifter breaks form and the weight gets outside the prescribed motor pathway. Sloppy technique will get you hurt!

Competitive Squatting:

Here is my Vegas 1998 16 week chart:

Ed Coan's Vegas 1998 Squat Chart

Weeks Until Meet	Weights & Reps	Equipment Worn
16	720x3	Belt
15	740x3	Belt
14	760x3	Belt
13	780x2	Belt
12	800x2	Belt
11	770x5	Wraps, Belt
10	788x5	Wraps, Belt
9	810x5	Wraps, Belt
8	832x5	Wraps, Belt
7	854x3	Wraps, Belt
6	Hurt Calf on Warm-ups No lift	
5	804x1 calves felt good	Belt
4	920x2	Wraps, Belt, Suit Straps Down
3	942x2	Wraps, Belt, Suit Straps Down
2	964x1 & 1003Walk Out 5 Sec Hold	Wraps, Belt Suit
1	625x5	No Gear
Meet	**1003**	

Note: I jump Approx. 20lbs per week for the first 5 weeks… you might want to start at 10lbs

Day 1: Legs and Abs

Squat (Warm ups & 1-2 worksets)

Week 1: Start with a 10, 5, 2 pyramid followed by 3 Sets of 10 with the same weight on all three sets these will be your work sets

Week 2: Same Pyramid but go up 20 lbs on the top set for 8 reps again three sets

Week 3: New pyramid 10-5-2-1 then go up 20 more lbs than the previous week… 3 sets of 5 reps

Week 4: Same pyramid but go up 15 lbs for 3 sets of 4 reps.

Week 5: Same pyramid yet go up another 15 lbs for 3 sets of 3 reps

Week 6: Same pyramid Go up 15 lbs for 3 sets of 2 reps

Week 7: Same pyramid up to 2 sets of 2 reps

Week 8: Max out Time! Pyramid up to a new record for yourself (you're new one rep max!)

**Note: Remember to take a weight you know you can get. No misses, this is to find out how well you did on this beginning cycle. Again these exercises are designed for you to increase strength within your squatting routine building a solid foundation.*

Approach to Leg Training from Ed Coan:

Big to Small, Large and Broad followed by isolative and precise. Translation: Start with a main exercise and finish with thoughtfully selected isolation exercises. Do not be afraid to rotate rep variants, styles of an exercise, and even the exercises themselves, alter pace and the key is to always anticipate the onset of staleness (you know muscle confusion). Obviously these principles have been brought forth above and the main exercise in that mix is Squat!

Additional Leg Exercises:

When it comes to assistance work or the additional exercises here my general rule of thumb is to perform two sets: one warm up set and one all out set. The first set I will pick a weight light enough to groove the technique and warm the muscle. I get in touch with the exercise on the first set. My second set is all-out. I try to add reps or poundage every workout.

Single Leg Press

So why single leg presses vs. double leg presses you ask? I feel that single leg presses are superior to double leg presses! It turns the movement into a concentration exercise. Many trainees make the mistake of thinking that leg presses are a close equivalent of squatting; not hardly. Use control and full range of motion when doing this exercise.

Start with light poundage and do a rep or two with both legs on your initial set if you need to so you can find the proper footing and placement. Once you get your positioning, take it to one leg (ten reps constitute a good warm up), allowing the weight to come down to a point where the top of the thigh contacts your chest. Lower under control and push explosively. Lock each rep fully and completely. Again I will reassert the full range of motion, so no half-stroke or shallow reps here. Refrain from the logic of "if I can do 10 plates with 2 legs I should be able to do 5 plates with one" this can get you hurt quickly! Start out light use a full stroke and push explosively!

Be aware that you may have muscle imbalance (I did), from in some cases a 10% and even 30% difference between legs can exist. Here is an example if you can do 10 reps with your strong leg at a top weight and only 6-9 reps with your weak leg then my friend you have a muscle imbalance. So how do you correct this? Isolate the weaker limb! Always work it first and exercise patience. I noticed that when I started doing this exercise I had a 55%-45% muscle imbalance and that after 3 months this narrowed considerably. Do a light warm up and then go all out on your second set.

Leg Extension and Leg Curls

For the extensions make sure your body is upright. Do not bounce or jerk the weight it could shear your muscle. Push the weight as fast as possible. Contract the thigh muscle hard at the lockout and hold it for a beat before lowering. Lower the weight under control as this ensures leg stability. Let it down slow (not ridiculously slow but controlled) and pause again at the bottom. Do not lose the tension at any point during the exercise.

Lying down for the leg curls will work your hamstrings. I do this exercise one leg at a time to isolate and correct any muscular imbalances I may have within my hamstrings. You must be able to pull the weight without heaving, jerking, or contorting. Use a smooth application of power and try to touch the pad to your butt at the conclusion of each rep. Try not to lose the tension at the bottom even though you may want to pause for a second prior to heading into the next rep. Do

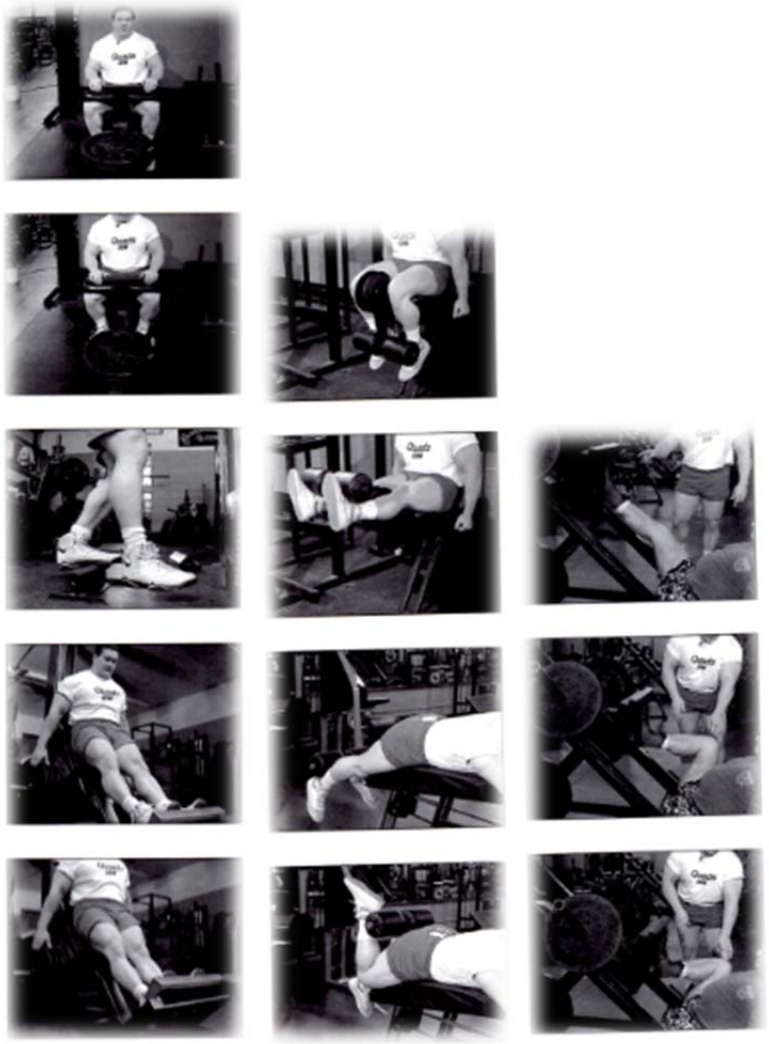
not let your hips rise while you do this as it will only make the exercise easier and we want proper form and hence be harder!

Again do 2 sets (a warm up and an all-out set) use a good rhythm and a full range of motion. I feel that working my hamstrings properly has protected me from severe injuries throughout my career so please do not neglect this exercise.

Calf Raises

I have always worked my calves hard. It helps with stabilizing my squatting. You can do calf raises many ways I prefer to do them seated. Here is why, the replicate the bottom position of a squat. This position emulates the low position in both the squat and the deadlift. This means added safety for me when doing other exercises!

Pause at the bottom and get a big stretch then go way upon the toes at the top. Hold it at the top for a full second before lowering under control. Calves respond to a higher rep range perform a light set and then a heavy set.



Single Leg Press: 2-3 sets 15 reps (One warm up set and 2 all out)

Leg Extension: 2-3 sets 15 reps (One warm up set and 2 all out)

Leg Curl: 3 Sets 15 reps (One warm up and 2 work sets)

Seated Calf Raises: 3 Sets 10-12 reps (or more)

Abs: Your choice 3 sets 20 reps

THE BENCH PRESS: Preparation and Incite

The bench press without a doubt, along with curls, is the most popular cost-free weight exercise in existence. The majority of people are far more amazed by the amount one can bench as opposed to the amount of one can deadlift or squat. Nearly everybody desires a big bench! Now consider the number of times somebody has asked the amount of you squat or deadlift? Enough stated!

There are usually 3 motion methods included with this power movement. The wide grip bench, which is generally better suited for the longer limbed physique; the narrow grip, which is generally much better for the much shorter limbed individuals; and finally, the reverse grip, which in the previous few years has been stated an appropriate type for competitors.

The large grip, minimizes the distance bench have to move. The hands are at the optimal legal length of 32 inches and it recruits more pectoral muscle fibers to do the work. The narrow grip, is normally around 28-30 inches and involves more triceps muscles and anterior triangular work. The reverse grip, for all practical purposes, will not be talked about in this book. What body kind are you? Now, pick your design. Obviously within this manual we have our core bench press and your natural grip should be used any other grip you are using for accessory exercises is really up to you.

Body Placement

The head, trunk and butt ought to be extended on the bench far from the uprights of the bench. This will avoid bench from striking the uprights when pushing the weight. The eyes need to be looking directly up to a fictional area on the ceiling. If able, try to curve the back as much as possible, while keeping the shoulders, head, and butts on the bench. This position will lessen the distance the bar has to take and will likewise allow the legs to drive the shoulders into the bench for much higher power.

Foot Placement

It is essential that the feet are put flat on the floor and underneath the lifter as far as possible. For those much shorter lifters, in competitors, you are allowed to develop a platform under your feet. Just make sure that whatever you utilize will not slip when lifting.

Hand Placement

Is it much better to use a closed regular grip (thumb around the bar) or the open hand "false" grip (thumb behind the bar)? World records have been set using either method, so apparently this is not exactly what makes world records. I have actually seen lots of lifters carried to the medical facility with busted ribs and internal injuries from making use of the false grip, so in my opinion, and we know about viewpoints, the incorrect grip is hazardous and unwieldy.

Bar Placement

When lowering the bar, bring the bar down to the lower pectoral area. When in the exaggerated arc body position and touching the bar in the lower pectoral location you can quickly see that the distance the bar need to travel is much less than when in a flat position. Typically, the lifter ought to move the bar at an angle or path that feels most natural.

Wrist Wraps

I make sure everybody has seen lifters wearing wrist wraps and questioned what function they serve. Below is the response. They must probably use wrist wraps if a lifter has weak wrists or tendinitis in the wrist location. These will not add any pounds to your lift; however will make it less uncomfortable if you have them covered.

The Belt

Many lifters wonder if the belt assists the bench press too. If you are using the overstated arc, which is recommended, then definitely stay clear of the belt.

Bench Press Shirts

The use of bench press shirts has not only minimized the number of bench press related injuries, however they have actually enabled lifters to set brand-new bench press records. The bench press shirt acts simply like the squat suit because it adds additional support to help the muscles in moving heavier weight. , if you make use of the bench shirt in training you will be able to train with heavier weights and stimulate more muscle development.. This will eventually bring about brand-new personal records in the bench.

How To Use The Bench Press Shirt: Bench press shirts come in different thicknesses. Use the bench press shirt simply like you would use the knee wraps and squat suit. Start out putting on a loose fitting shirt when you start doing sets of five reps, then slowly work up to the contest shirt as the weight gets heavier and repetitions decrease. (This is just general)

Warning: Do not lift in a shirt with tears of runners. Sooner or later the shirt will burn out while you are reducing the weight to your chest. This will no doubt cause you to completely lose control of the bar. The chance of injury is not worth the price of a new bench press shirt.

Breaking Down an Ed Coan Bench:

Far too much training time is spent performing bench presses and curls. If as much time and energy were directed at training legs and back, these athletes would end up a whole lot stronger and bigger as a result, I trained my chest and biceps about 25% of my available training time while shoulder and triceps makes up about another 25%. Back and legs comprised the other 50% of my work out routines. Do you see the symmetry? The bench can be broken down like this, pristine technique executed with perfect concentration and lots of intensity! I preferred to work the standard competition bench, narrow (close) grip with a pause, as well as incline bench press also with a pause.

I am 5’6” and use a 28 inch grip, measured from forefinger to forefinger, in the competitive bench press. Take a slightly wider grip if you are taller and a narrower grip if shorter. Use this identical grip width on the accessory exercises if you can.

Dig your feet in hard, this will stabilize you. Arch your back, keep your butt in contact with the bench at all times. Never bounce the bar off your chest. I use a touch and go style; the bar is taken down under control, contacts the chest precisely and lightly before I explode upwards.

Grip the bar hard! Leave some Finger prints! Inhale mightily, push the bar off the supports, lower the bar slowly, contact the chest and explode up! Push straight up – initially. Towards the end of the stroke, arc the bar slightly back to lockout. Exhale at the top and repeat.

Use a spotter at all times. It really is this easy. The hard part is continually monitoring these simplistic technical guidelines and making the appropriate adjustments. Your technique is your signature so make it legible.

Laying out a Cycle

Obviously we have an 8 week plan for you here and I want you to follow that especially if you are starting out. But if you want to experiment I am going to give you another example here. Let's say your 1RM is 250 lbs in the bench 200 lbs in the narrow grip bench press and 175 lbs in the 45 degree include bench press. Now let's say that you want to get to 280 lbs 1RM. Here is how one would do it in 12 weeks. Again I want you to understand the basic 8 week table in the very beginning of the manual is ideal no matter where you are at in your lifting routine. 8 weeks is a good start to get your gains from either starting out, for competitions, recovering, you name it. I am providing different examples for you to get a sense of what "could" be done.

To succeed you need to be realistic in your initial self-assessment and conservative in your weekly jumps. Many lifters will add bodyweight (purposely) over the cycle. Attempting to gain a pound of muscle a week over the lift of the power cycle, will stimulate muscular growth. Good eating will speed recovery and make sure you maintain positive nitrogen balance, the optimal metabolic state for fueling strength gains – during the life of the cycle.

Ed Coan's 12 Week Bench Cycle Example

Week	Bench	Narrow Grip	Incline Bench Press
1	160x8	120X8	80X8
2	170x8	130X8	90X8
3	180x5	140X8	100X8
4	190x5	150X8	110X8
5	200x5	160X5	120X5
6	210x5	170X5	130X5
7	220x5	180X5	140X5
8	230x5	190X5	150X5
9	240x3	200X3	160X3
10	250x3	210X3	170X3
11	260x2	230X2	180X2
12	270x2	240X2	190X2
13	280x1	250X1	200X1
New 1RM	**280**	**250**	**200**

Note: This is an example that obviously includes some of your accessory exercise layout

This type of approach could be deemed 'Strength Cycling 101' if you will. There are loads of sophisticated cycle variations, though all have certain commonalities, all systematically introduce or reduce extraneous elements. Rest, sets, reps, exercise selection, etc. they are all tinkered with to goose progress.

Now go ahead and scroll down to Day 2 which would be chest exercises! You can also go to the Coan Video Library within the membership and see the way I actually performed the exercises!

Day 2: Chest and Abs

Bench Press

Week 1: Start with a 10, 5, 2 pyramid followed by 3 Sets of 10 with the same weight on all three sets these will be your work sets

Week 2: Same Pyramid but go up 10 lbs on the top set for 8 reps again three sets

Week 3: New pyramid 10-5-2-1 then go up 10 more lbs than the previous week… 3 sets of 5 reps

Week 4: Same pyramid but go up 10 lbs for 3 sets of 4 reps.

Week 5: Same pyramid yet go up another 10 lbs for 3 sets of 3 reps

Week 6: Same pyramid Go up 10 lbs for 3 sets of 2 reps

Week 7: Same pyramid up to 2 sets of 2 reps

Week 8: Max out Time! Pyramid up to a new record for yourself (you're new one rep max!)

**Note: Remember to take a weight you know you can get. No misses, this is to find out how well you did on this beginning cycle. Again these exercises are designed for you to increase strength within your benching routine building a solid foundation.*

Approach to Chest Exercises from Ed Coan

When it comes to the Bench Press you need to start with a solid technique concept. You need to develop a lifting style. He is an example; keep your butt on the bench at all times no exceptions. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Inhale like you are trying to suck all of the air out of the room on the descent. Lower the bar in a slow, controlled fashion to a point just above the nipples. Do not bounce the bar off the fully expanded chest. Drive it straight up and then glide back towards the racks. I use a 28 inch grip between my forefingers. I lock all my reps fully at the top and I pause my narrow grip bench presses and incline presses.

Why do I do this? In the bench press, I can move more significant weight with a touch and go approach. To complement this loose technique, I pause all my auxiliary work; the pause forces me to explode the weight off my chest. If I don't explode, the weight will not budge.

Additional Exercises:

Narrow Grip (Close Grip) Bench Press

Why do we do narrow grip bench presses? Simple, bigger, stronger, triceps and delts are built through narrow grip bench pressing. This will result in a heavier competitive bench press (or make you really strong which ever your goal is). Make sure the ribcage is maximally expanded as the bar is paused. Maintain muscular tension throughout the pause and explode the bar off the chest.

Incline Press

Very similar to the rest of the bench routines, take in your air, let the bar down under control, then press up and somewhat back. I use two work sets in competitive benches, narrows grips, inclines, and press behind the necks. I will work up to a top weight and then perform two sets with this poundage, usually, but not always. The key is to perform these with precision.

Close Grip Bench Press: 2 Sets 8 reps **(3 fingers closer than a regular bench press grip) Be sure to drop much lower in weight*

Incline Bench (barbell): 2 Sets 8 reps *(regular bench press grip) Again starting at a light weight

Chest Flys: 2 sets 20 reps dumb bell or machine

Triceps Pushdowns: 4 Sets 10 reps

Dips: 3 Sets 10-20 reps

Abs: Your choice 3 sets 20 reps

THE DEADLIFT: *Preparation and Incite*

Numerous who have observed a powerlifting satisfy have stated out of the 3 lifts the deadlift is the most remarkable and incredible looking of the 3. Lots of times a remarkable deadlift means the difference in between 2nd and first place in competition. This is why powerlifters state, "The competition isn't really over till the bar touches the floor." The deadlift incorporates overall strength, explosiveness, and power. It is among the few lifts where you have no idea what the weight feels like till you begin the pull. This implies correct mental preparation is necessary to move those heavy singles.

The deadlift is not just for powerlifters. As you will find, this exercise will construct total body mass more quickly than any other single workout. Lots of weight lifters are scared to attempt this mass building exercise, and I have actually seen some pretty bad form utilized by the lonely few who utilize this workout.

The Stance

There are two kinds of deadlift positions being utilized today: the conventional style and the sumo style. With the traditional style the lifter takes a stance about shoulder's width and the arm will hang straight outside the knees. This stance utilizes more of the quads and low back...so keep those hips down and that back straight. The second stance is sumo. Sumo stance is a position anywhere from past shoulder's width to a more extreme wide stance. Of course the arms will hang inside the knees. as you can see, the sumo stance gets the lifter a little closer to the floor so the bar actually has less distance to travel. Also the lifter is

starting in more of a half squat position. As we all know you can half squat much more than full squat. With this stance more of the stress is taken off the low back and put on the hips and glutes. Which stance is the best ... well world records have been set by lifters making use of both stances.

Feet and Shin Position

Feet ought to point out to a 45 degree angle. The shins need to be 2 to 3 inches from the bar then when you in fact flex down, the shins will touch the bar. Most of the weight will be on the heels of the feet similar to the squat. During ascent the bar will travel as close to the leg and shins as possible.

Hand Position

With either stance a reverse grip should be made use of. Do not make use of a hook grip ... hold the bar high up on the palm to compensate for any roll of the bar when pulling the weight up. The grip ought to start with the index finger and the little finger bordering the knurling in the middle of the bar.

Head Placement and Where To Look

Just like the form for squats, the head should be up, the hips down, and the back flat. I can't over emphasize the importance of this bit of advice; just since it will assist the lifter avoid low back injuries. By keeping the hips down, the tension is taken off the reduced back and put on the more effective quadriceps. Keeping the eyes and head up, aids in keeping the spine in proper position.

The Belt

The belt is utilized to maintain lumbar integrity through ascent and descent. Get a belt that is as wide in the front as in the back. Refrain from using a belt throughout lighter sets. Attempt to just use a belt for maximal and near-maximal sets or the heavy work sets. The belt-less sets enable the deep abdominal muscles to receive a training stimulus without putting excessive compressive forces on the spinal column disks.

Lifting Suits

Lifting suits are an additional requirement for huge deadlifts. It is suggested that extremely tight suits be utilized for those that sumo lift and a looser suit for the traditional stance deadlifters.

When To Use A Lifting Suit:

Put on a suit when you start getting into the sets of five reps. I like to utilize three various fits. One that is a little loose fitting, one that is tight fitting, and a contest suit that is a size or 2 too little. The lifting suit should get tighter as the weights increase and the repetitions decrease. So you would utilize the loose fitting suit for the sets of 5 and the competition suit for your heaviest sets and contest. The heavier the weight the more support you will require. Many knowledgeable lifters even leave the straps of the suit down until they start doing singles.

Warning:

Constantly examine your suit for runners or splits. Do not deadlift in a suit that that may potentially rip or "blow out." When the suit blows out all support will all of a sudden be lost. This might potentially trigger you to completely lose control of bar as well as fall with the weight. The opportunity of injury is not worth the cost of a brand-new suit.

Foot Apparel

The closer the lifter is to the floor, the less distance the bar has to be pulled. Thus, less overall work and potentially even more weight lifted. Lots of lifters prefer to deadlift in their socks or a thin sandal. Neither of these 2 offer significantly traction. It is very possible that the lifter might slip. Another popular shoe is the fumbling shoe. The fumbling shoe has an extremely thin sole, has great traction, and likewise provides ankle support. In my opinion this is the better choice of foot clothing.

Chalk

Many lifters utilize a magnesium carbonate chalk when deadlifting. It is highly suggested that the hands lightly chalked to prevent any slipping of the bar.

Numerous lifters utilize powder on the thighs to cut some of the friction that is encountered when the bar is pulled up the leg.

Breaking Down an Ed Coan Deadlift:

Conventional Deadlift:

In the conventional deadlift start with the shins touching the bar. I use narrow foot spacing with about six inches between my heels. Squat down keeping a perfectly flat back and grip the barbell an inch outside the smooth portion of the bar. When starting the lift I apply about 100lbs of upward pressure on the bar: not enough to lift it, but enough to acquire muscle-tension throughout my body. As I am tensed, in pre-launched position, I run down my mental checklist: back flat and tight? Head up? Shoulders back? Tail-bone low? Arms straight? Then I explode upward, pushing hard with the legs to initiate the movement. Push with the legs, pull the weight in, keep the chest up, and pull the shoulders back. As the bar leaves the platform, I throw my head up and back. The bar travels up my shins, which are perpendicular to the floor. I lead with my head, which forces my shoulder to move back and up. I am attempting to keep the hips from rising. If the structural integrity of the lift (established at take-off) is maintained, the lift will be successful. If the hips come up too fast, the upper torso will be pitched forward and the bar will stall because the lower back is unable to reestablish the optimal groove.

As the barbell drags up over the knees and reaches the thighs I kick the bar back, along the plane of the thigh. This is a bio-mechanically superior pulling the position and if I can get the weight to this position, I can finish it. My strong point is my finish. This is where a good grip comes into play. The better you grip, the more time you have to pull a weight and lockout.

At lockout, everything should arrive at once. This holds true for all styles! If the deadlift is done correctly the shins, thighs, hips, torso will simultaneously snap into the locked vertical position. Incorrectly done, the legs will lock out first, leaving the torso in a disadvantageous position, and then having to crane or derrick the weight to lockout. Weak leg strength in relation to back strength is the

culprit. I lower the bar carefully and replace it on the platform. Without releasing my grip, losing my position or relaxing my muscle tension, I pause for a split-second and pull the next rep. This is known as dead-stop style. Most powerlifters bounce between deadlift reps to take advantage of momentum and this makes the start of the deadlift easier. I never bounce, and always dead stop between my reps. Dead stopping improves the ability to break a weight from the floor. Squats and benches are eccentric-concentric: deadlift is concentric only. Don't make deadlifts eccentric-concentric by bouncing the reps: dead stop reps and purpose-fully break the momentum.

Sumo Deadlift:

I think of my sumo-style deadlift as a reverse squat. I point my toes slightly outward as I assume my stance. My shins touch the bar where the 32-inch rings circle the bar. Depending on your height, this foot width will vary. I descend with a straight, tight, relatively upright back. I grab the bar where the smooth touches the knurling and drip my hips. I wiggle into position tensing my legs, butt and back. From this tight and low starting position, I initiate the pull be pushing with my legs. My back stays flat and I make sure my chest stays inflated as I begin the pull. The deadlift is the number on technique powerlift. Past a certain point, you will not be able to muscle-up a lift.

Sumo deadlifting uses primarily hip and leg power. Back involvement is (relatively) minimal. Establish a perpendicular torso position at the start and maintain it throughout. Gravitational forces will want the back to bend you forward. Throw the head back to counteract this tendency. As the bar leaves the floor, I push down with the legs and pull the weight into me. During this pull it in phase as I call it, I shoot my hips forward. Push downward with the legs and keep the chest up as you drive the hips forward and throw the shoulders back. The mistake most sumo pullers make is neglecting to perform lower-back strengthening conventional style deadlifts. A sumo puller needs a strong lower back to resist the natural tendency to allow the hips to rise during the initial phase of the lift. Ingrain technique on every rep of every set.

Competition Deadlift Chart

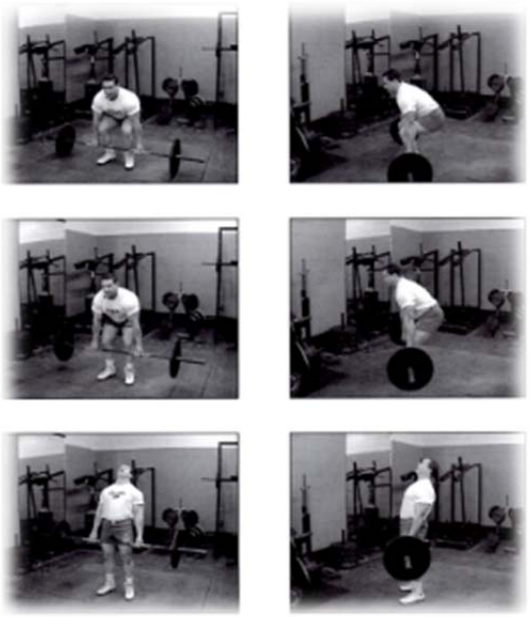
Ed Coan's 15 Week Deadlift Cycle Example

Week	Weight & Reps	All Out Top Set	Deadlift Style	Equipment Worn
1	710x5	1	Conventional	None
2	725x5	1	Conventional	None
3	740x5	1	Conventional	None
4	755x5	1	Conventional	None
5	770x5	1	Conventional	None
6	795x3	1	Conventional	None
7	805x3	1	Conventional	None
8	780x3	1	Sumo	Belt
8	815x3	1	Conventional	None
9	800x3	1	Sumo	Belt
9	825x2	1	Conventional	None
10	820x3	1	Sumo	Belt
10	835x2	1	Conventional	None
11	840x3	1	Sumo	Belt
12	860x2	1	Sumo	Belt
13	880x2	1	Sumo	Belt
14		off		
New 1RM	**900x1**			

Note: This is an example that obviously includes some of your accessory exercise layout

Final Deadlift Tip:

I use a lot of back and hip in my squat. Over the past few years I have been forced, due to injury, to pull using conventional style. My poundage suffers because I can pull fifty pounds in excess of my current conventional deadlift by using sumo. I would urge you to practice both types and please work in some stiff lead deadlifts and their off the plate deadlift variants. Plate work will astronomically boost your regular pulling ability. I will drop stiff legs when I commence sumo pulling. Row like a powerlifter, move some serious poundage and save the light and precise stuff for the chins, pulldowns and rear deltoid raises. This is hard, hard work, so eat some wholesome, nutritious food after this workout. A high protein and high carbohydrate sports drink is great after a tough workout.



DAY 3: Back, Calves, and Abs

Deadlift

Week 1: Start with a 10, 5, 2 pyramid followed by 3 Sets of 10 with the same weight on all three sets these will be your work sets

Week 2: Same Pyramid but go up 15 lbs on the top set for 8 reps again three sets

Week 3: New pyramid 10-5-2-1 then go up 15 more lbs than the previous week 3 sets of 5 reps

Week 4: Same pyramid but go up 15 lbs for 3 sets of 4 reps.

Week 5: Same pyramid yet go up another 15 lbs for 3 sets of 3 reps

Week 6: Same pyramid Go up 15 lbs for 3 sets of 2 reps

Week 7: Same pyramid up to 2 sets of 2 reps

Week 8: Max out Time! Pyramid up to a new record for yourself (you're new one rep max!)

**Note: Remember to take a weight you know you can get. No misses, this is to find out how well you did on this beginning cycle. Again these exercises are designed for you to increase strength within your deadlift routine building a solid foundation.*

Approach to Back Exercises from Ed Coan

I perform four varieties of deadlifting which are conventional, sumo, and the two stiff-

legged variants of the conventional deadlift (off the floor, off a block). Typically, I will perform conventional deadlifts then back them up with a few sets of stiff legged deadlifts. I "save" my sumo deadlifts for the last six workouts prior to competition (obviously depending on how you are using this strength training manual use the sumo as you see fit), I find that sumo deadlifts mixed with squats in the same weak can really be hard on the hips and legs causing you to over train the muscles. So I alternate the conventional with the sumo.

Additional Exercises:

Bent Over Rows

Take the bar with a slightly bigger than shoulder width and assume a 60 degree angle, arch the back and from the dead hang position straighten your body out (at the angle) about 10 degrees upwardly (read explosively) moving the weight. Keep the legs static, do not let them straighten or bend. Also do not hold the weight at the top for a pause as this reduces the amount of weight you can use and renders the entire exercise useless! Pull hard, the bar should touch your waist and then lower the weight for the next rep.

Lat pull downs/Chin Ups

Wide grip, inhale as you pull up (or in the case of the lat pull downs… pull down), and exhale as you release down (or again in the case of the lat pull downs extend and stretch). Do not lean back as you do the lat pull downs.

Bent over Laterals

This exercise builds the often neglected rear delt. Use relatively light poundage. Full range of motion and minimal body heave.

Bent over rows (my favorite): 2 Sets 10 reps *Make sure to do a warm up weight with a medium grip at first

1 Arm dumb bell rows: 1 set 20 reps (I like to just do an all-out set after barbell rows)

Chin-ups or Lat Pull Downs: 3 sets 10-12 reps (wide grip)

Seated Calf Raises: 3 Sets 10-12 reps

Abs: Your choice 3 sets 20 reps

<u>Day 4</u>: <u>Light Chest, Arms (Biceps and Shoulders)</u>

Light Weight Wide grip Bench Press: 3 sets 10 reps

Standing Military Press or Seated Behind the Neck Press: 3 Sets 8-12 reps

Upright rows (wider grip): 3 Sets 8-12 reps

Bent Over Dumb Bell Lateral Raises or Machine Back Delts: 3 sets 15 reps

Barbell Curls or Preacher Curls or Dumb Bell Curls: 4 Sets 12 Reps

Press Behind the Neck

Lower the bar to a point where the nape of the neck meet the skull and push upwards. Lock fully on each and every rep and don't skimp on lowering the barbell. The PBN stimulates the delts and triceps to a lesser extent. I keep my chest out and elbows back on the descent and ascent.

Front Lateral Raises

For my front lateral raises I do not have my palms facing down but instead have them facing towards me almost like a hammer curl. I feel this hand position on the dumbbell, it isolates the front delt more. I move the dumbbells together and avoid heaving the weight. Let the shoulder move the weight and maintain a continuous tension through the movement.

Side Lateral Raises

I prefer to do these seated because it forces me to do a stricter movement therefore isolating my shoulders more. This helps reduce the natural tendency to use the body English to swing the weights. Most of the tension occurs at the top of the stroke. Do not cut the stroke short, and thereby avoid the muscle building portion of the exercise.

Your Lifting Schedule:

What was given above was a very good 4 day a week program to help you increase your strength no matter what level you are at. Obviously if you are going for competition you will want to see our forth coming Competition guide which is free with your membership!

As long as you are doing this 4 day schedule you can do a 2 days on one day off 2 days on 2 days off (on a 7 day weekly cycle) this way legs, chest, and back get their own days. Most athletes powerlifters or otherwise enjoy this type of a training schedule as it is very practical.

This could be modified for a 3 day schedule as well and would look like this:

Day 1: Legs

Day 2: Chest and Arms

Day 3: Back and Shoulders

Let's say you were really pressed for time days of the week wise. A 2 day schedule would look something like this:

Day 1: Legs (drop the leg press), Chest, Triceps

Day 2: Back, Shoulders, Biceps (drop stiffs and laterals)

An Important Note on Rest Days:

I would like to stress the importance of rest as it relates to the strength building process. In my own case, I sleep like a rock. My body seems to crave every second of rest I can provide it. I am convinced that there is a direct relationship between sleep, muscular recuperation and growth. Well, no kidding, you say – but you would not believe how many athletes are doing all the right things in the terms of training and eating, yet they don't progress. If you dig further you usually find out that they are not getting quality rest. There is a difference between lounging and deep REM (rapid eye movement) regenerative sleep. To lay about watching TV is

not the type of rest I am referring to. I sleep around ten hours a day and need it to recuperate and grow.

Science has begun to catch up on my thoughts about this! A body that is not rested cannot heal. Full and total rest stimulates the regenerative processes fully and totally. Should aspiring powerlifters and those wanting to grow in strength sleep 10 hours a day? No, not unless you are squatting 1000 lbs or pulling 900 lbs. My rest requirements are directly related to the poundage and abuse I put my body through. The stress and trauma of heavy lifting and heavy weight training is extreme. Bottom line no matter if you work a full time job, through some overtime in there or if you are a full time athlete you need to make sure your body is getting the proper rest requirements. If not it will severally effect your strength training and growth.

Simple Nutritional and Supplementation Thoughts:

At the peak of my powers I would take in between one and one and a half grams of protein per pound of my body weight each and every day. So back then I was taking in about 240-360 grams of protein per day. I would usually drink a protein shake or two throughout the day in order to make those numbers happen. I couldn't get it from my food intake alone as I was not a huge eater by powerlifting standards. I would highly recommend you get something to eat after your workout. It makes perfect sense to re-fuel after a tough powerlifting workout. If you cannot get somewhere to consume some real food its best to get a protein shake in you after a good workout. You have to be able to re-fuel and feed your body.

In terms of supplements I would take Creatine monohydrate as it helped me to recover from training much quicker, and I also found that I could actually maintain my weight easier while I was on it. So protein powder and creatine were my go to for supplements. I would also in corporate a multi vitamin and minerals as well as a few vitamin c with breakfast. Bottom line is to not over eat and especially do not under eat.

I would eat 4 square meals a day with little to no snacking between meals. My general rule of thumb for protein to carbs to fat was about 40-30-30. Some powerlifters worry more about their diet and I find that counterproductive.

When planning out your meals eat a modest portion of protein with some starchy carbs like rice and or potatoes and make sure to include some fiber whether it's some good greens or whatever your favorite fiber would be. I would try to avoid night eating at every cost. After 7pm it put on fat!

If you are looking to gain weight my suggestion would be to do it slowly. No more than a pound or two a week. If you are gaining more than that chances are its fat. If you need to lose weight also do it slowly. The chances of you losing weight fast can contribute to you losing muscle as well.

The bottom line is this, don't starve yourself and don't stuff yourself. Keep it simple and listen to your body.

My hope is that you take these 8 weeks seriously; you get active in submitting questions and especially videos while also becoming a force of encouragement in the forum/Facebook group. I am doing this project for you! You bought this program because you wanted to invest in your health and fitness future… Don't waste it! Now Let's Get Stronger!

Ed Coan